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# NORTH AMERICA AND FRANCE\*

## PART II

BY GABRIEL HANOTAUX, MEMBER OF THE "ACADÉMIE FRANÇAISE,"  
PRESIDENT OF THE "COMITÉ FRANCE-AMÉRIQUE"

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### I

When we have admitted that after a separation which has lasted less than a century and a half a civilization has been developed on American soil which as it exists to-day can teach many lessons and offer many examples to the European civilization, of which it is the child, we may in all sincerity seek to discover what America has to learn from Europe generally and, in spite of the common prejudice which exists to-day in America, from France in particular.

France needs an advocate to plead her case among Americans. Various causes have contributed to diminish her in their eyes, some real and others false or greatly exaggerated. Americans themselves seem to have had for some time past a vague feeling of injustice done, or at least of misapprehension. They feel that it would be well to be more equitable and better informed. What truer and more significant sign of a step in this direction can be found than the exchanges of professors which were organized almost spontaneously between the great universities of France and America? Part of this movement consists in presenting to those who are well disposed certain facts and certain interpretations in a new and clearer light.

The French people are in a state of decadence. France is a kind of "Poland" destined to an early dismemberment! It is easy to understand the origin of this verdict, severely pessimistic as it is.

The war of 1870, following so closely the war with Mexico (where France found herself almost the enemy of Ameri-

\* Translated by Paul Fuller, Jr.

can Nationalism, then in peril), was considered by the Puritans across the Channel and the Atlantic, influenced by the German press and by the press of other Protestant countries, as a chastisement sent by Providence against Catholicism and the Latin races. The long political and diplomatic difficulties which after 1870 put the French nation in a position antagonistic to England, brought forth a propaganda of slander and hate. The necessity in which France found herself of at once rebuilding a colonial empire (under the penalty of stepping down from her exalted position among the nations of the world) prolonged during a quarter of a century this Franco-English antagonism, which, naturally enough, had its effect in all countries of Anglo-Saxon origin. Add to this that France herself, overwhelmed with the burden of her defeats and the great task before her, kept aloof, so to speak, from the rest of the world while people of other nations, her competitors, and enemies took possession of the universe undisturbed.

And then, as I have already remarked, France has done much to belittle herself. Taine was the chief of an unnecessarily pessimistic school. Desmoulins's work on the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon marked the culmination of a campaign reflecting the disenchantment and bitterness of defeat. French literature was pleased to label itself "decadent."

France herself did not realize the signs of her own regeneration, while the world and her own sons were predicting irretrievable loss. Works testify in her favor more loudly than words. Far from being on the downward path, on the contrary, she stood erect, regaining her youth, her prosperity, and her vigor.

The most striking proof of the vitality of France was given to the world by the ardor and determination with which her people accepted the military burdens imposed upon them by defeat and by the armed peace of Europe. The liberal powers of the world, and more especially those of Anglo-Saxon origin, well know how difficult it is to obtain from a democratic population, master of its own destiny, the *voluntary* adhesion to *obligatory* military service.

For the word obligatory is but a word: if the people did not wish to serve, who could force them? It is, therefore, because of a spontaneous and constant spirit of sacrifice which has continued and has been renewed from generation

to generation, a spirit of personal and pecuniary sacrifice on the part of fathers as well as on the part of their children, that France has been maintained for forty years in the state of an "armed nation."

There are no exceptions nor privileges. All Frenchmen alike wear the uniform or carry the knapsack. Opportunities for advancement are equal to all, and the risk of life or death in the garrison and on the field of battle is also the same for all. The army is a school where equality, discipline, and moral and physical deportment are enforced. The individual surrenders several years of his life to be charged against the Fatherland. Can there be a more noble conception of social duty?

Thus France has trained and prepared herself to such an extent that in the greatest of all sports, the sport of arms, no power, military or imperial, can confidently claim its superiority; artillery, small-arms, forts, technical details, instruction, capacity, and courage—all these she has gathered together and mobilized. The French army is the only great democratic army capable of the struggle for the independence of its country. Is not the most striking sign of a desire to live found in the organization and maintenance of a defensive army, made up of the people themselves, all, ready to shed their blood in the national defense?

It cannot be said that a people is decadent which disposes of two millions of armed men trained and well commanded, a people whom all others look to, and upon whom all others depend. To destroy the international balance of power it would be necessary first to crush France, and in this fact indeed the rest of the world finds security. If France has regained her place in the first rank of modern nations it is largely due to the ease with which she has borne and continues to bear the heavy tax of military service. Before pitying her lot, her critics should first imitate her in this regard.

A certain materialistic tendency of modern civilization tends to judge the power of a people by their economic resourcefulness. From this point of view also how distorted and erroneous are the judgments in circulation with regard to France! Though her economic activity were actually decreasing, it would be a mistake to conclude that her destruction was inevitable. Nations whose commerce is little developed are not always those nearest to decay. But even

from this standpoint it is well to examine facts as they really are and to beware of ready-made judgments.

Nobody denies, in the first place, that France is the richest country in the world, or has at her disposal greater riches than any other country. France comes to the rescue with her investments whenever a world crisis is threatened and whenever a country in the process of development has need of financial assistance. Thus has she acquired in the world of international economy a position no less enviable than that which is hers in military matters. Commercial and financial alliances with France are sought after for the same reason that political alliances are made, because she has at her disposal two forces equally important and pre-eminent—her army and her wealth.

And can it be imagined that this wealth is due solely to the saving habits which are ingrained in the French people? Would saving habits suffice to enrich a nation? The French proverb says of the saving man that he would "shear an egg." Shearing eggs is a process that carries very little profit, for as another proverb has it, "Where there is nothing, the king forfeits his rights."

French wealth has a larger, more open and fertile source: the constant activity of national production. Here may be traced the reason for the constantly increasing but little understood prosperity of her commerce.

In general, statistics are against us. The sea does not come to our assistance. On the contrary, she fills our ports with sand and favors our competitors. She is on the side of statistics. It cannot be denied that our merchant marine is on the wane. It is likely that enterprises of this sort do not offer French capital and labor sufficient advantages. The system of "inscription" useful under Colbert is now a burden merely, and has seen its day. Whatever the reasons, we do not ourselves transport our merchandize beyond seas, and on land we are also obliged to go through alien territory which surrounds us on all sides.

The result is that French products shipped by land or sea on foreign carriers too often appear in statistics as foreign merchandise. On the other hand, the direct sale of French manufactures to the foreign purchaser visiting France brings extremely handsome profits, but this also escapes official notice and recognition. This explains many most important omissions and alterations.

In general statistical tables are made according to the English standard. Certain special articles of enormous importance in the commerce of England—coal, iron, cloth, etc.—are given prominence, while articles particularly identified with France, such as fruits, wines, and luxuries, are confined under the heading “Miscellaneous.”

I have personally seen official reports showing the commerce between France and China as practically nil, whereas in fact, by the sale of rice from Indo-China and the purchase of silk for the industries of Lyons, we are among her heaviest customers. But in making these statistical tables, silk shipped from Hongkong is entered as English exports, and the rice from Indo-China came under the heading “divers products of Asiatic origin.” This did not rob France of a centime of her commercial profits, but it marred her commercial features.

Heavy tonnage is given prominence in these statistical tables, but heavy merchandise does not usually represent the most profitable trade. French merchandise, often light in weight, brings in the greatest profit; and this, after all, is the matter of most importance. A shipment of coal, for instance, is of enormous weight but of small profit when compared with the sale of diamonds, which is another species of carbon of small tonnage and large profit. A picture-hat from the Rue de la Paix represents small tonnage and large profit; so with a painting, a jewel, a bottle of champagne, or an ostrich plume. French commerce prefers that class of business where the freight rates are small and the profits large; so that the really considerable growth of French commerce remains unnoticed by the world when in fact it exists, and the fruits of this growth may be found in the stockings of the people. Such examples might be multiplied, but these will suffice as authority for the common-sense statement that if France has immense wealth at her disposal she must be wealthy, and if wealthy her economical powers must be great, and her commercial faculties adapted to get the advantages of her wealth and of her natural and industrial resources. France has a luxurious clientele willing to pay high for its satisfactions, the flower of good buyers. This is the true source of her prosperity, which anybody might well envy her.

France receives from her capital invested abroad an annual income equal to the amount of the national budget;

she could live on her income, exerting no greater effort than is needed to cut off coupons; but instead she is always at work, watching her opportunities, ever unsatisfied, and her own severest critic. In the economic order, as in war, science, art, and literature, she is always at work and always on the alert.

Her nonchalance and good-humor are misleading to outsiders; she carries the burden of labor so lightly that she is never weary, never out of breath. Her wealth itself is not a trouble to her; she adds to it unceasingly without haste or overexertion. The spirit of economy in French people is the virtue of prudence, and not a sign of greed; it is as serviceable to other lands as to her own. She administers her fortune wisely, and makes it of use in fostering universal comfort and well-being, for there is hardly an enterprise in the world that France has not been instrumental in establishing through financial assistance.

In presence of such facts to declare and to reiterate, like a lesson committed to memory, that France is in a state of economical decadence, amounts to a ridiculous contradiction in terms, a blind and selfish effort to cloud the truth and belittle a competitor. The economic quotient of France in proportion to its population is one of the greatest of the world. This is attested by reliable statistics and by the general prosperity of the country; and we must always bear in mind that commerce is merely commerce, and by no means the touchstone of civilization.

Shall we now plead the cause of France from the standpoint of morality, national or individual? If so, let us look into evidence of the greatest authority because of its impartial character, the evidence, for example, of Mr. Barrett Wendell and Sir Thomas Barclay. The reaction of public opinion in our favor has begun. The simple truth is now being accepted that the foreigners who go to France in search of questionable entertainment themselves provide it. The Riviera in winter during the time of the carnival at Nice is to-day nothing more than a Teutonic kermess. Nor can we explain where the crowds come from who are seen on certain nights on our boulevards, but they are certainly not exclusively French.

French literature (or to be more exact, the French novel) is not characterized in recent days, it must be admitted, by any extreme spirit of prudery. But why condemn French

literature as a whole? Our publicists, our historians, our thinkers, our philosophers and poets, are these to be ignored when speaking of the literary productions of the country? And the theater, though at times it may exhibit “*risqué*” scenes, does it not, on the whole, represent one of the most noble examples of observation and moralization which humanity has ever produced? How otherwise can we explain that the French drama provides almost all the material for the stage in the largest foreign cities? The play and the novel, which are necessarily devoted almost exclusively to the study of customs and the depicting of character, have occasionally dwelt on certain unpleasant and too vivid subjects; but every one is aware that the novel and the drama are not intended for the youth of the country, and that from the oldest times have figured among the privileged arts.

French literary, artistic, and scientific productions are considerable, and along these lines, France yields each year to the world an abundant harvest of beautiful and useful works. Can this be said to reveal the existence of base spirits or wicked hearts? How unjust it is to consider only the rare instances where art wanders into dangerous subtleties or displays a haughty indifference to human aspirations! The number of good books published and excellent plays produced in France every year is so great that we need not feel hurt or injured by the charge so often repeated of decadence, which has been so imprudently made within our own borders. The tiresome type of novel does not constitute the length and breadth of English literature, nor, on the other hand, does the light novel constitute the whole of French literature.

It is optional with us to enjoy or ignore the one and the other. Those who enjoy this class of literature and who make it possible by their support, have only themselves to reproach.

In the main, our national morality is on quite as high a plane as that of the foreign nations who weigh us down with their sarcasm. One could discuss this question *ad infinitum*. In France or out of France the largest cities offer spectacles and temptations not to be found in the wiser and more sedate provinces, and we must remember that it is outside of the cities and in the provinces that the generations are kept pure and wholesome. Climates differ, and different races have different temperaments, but the



open indulgence in vice of some nations is no worse than the brutal hypocrisy of others.

The French family is a model of decorum and affectionate solidarity. Between husband and wife (save in very rare instances) there exists a remarkable unanimity of sentiment and unitedness of purpose, with the ever-present object of leaving to their children and their children's children the results of their own labor. The spirit of economy here again is altogether representative of the French family; it means simply self-denial of the living for the benefit of those to come. Economy is a chain uniting succeeding generations. The Frenchman never spends the whole of his salary, his profit, or his income; he first puts aside enough to guarantee life and comfort to his family. In a word, he insures himself and those dependent upon him against the risks of life by a constant, intelligent, and far-seeing self-abnegation.

This conception of the family, viewed as a permanent and continuing institution, surviving the individual and each particular generation, is essentially French. It is evidenced by the customary dowry of daughters, which assures the bride a respected place in the family of which she is about to become a part, by the usual custom of a community of interest between husband and wife, by the equal inheritance among children, the scarcity of divorces, and by the strength of the family tie. This attitude places husband and wife on an equal footing and produces a feeling of equality among the children which tends toward a full development of each individual member of the family and fosters a sense of dignity and responsibility. France is not a country of "suffragettes"; probably by reason of the fact that in France womanhood holds a higher place than would be accorded her by giving her the right to enter the polling booths.

Is it necessary to recall the qualities of the Frenchwoman in her relation as a daughter, wife, or mother? She it is who is the real apostle of French morality. The child takes in with the mother's milk the spirit of honor and gentle living; her lessons and her examples are later on the support of youth; and her bravery, her sobriety, and her constancy assist and soothe misfortune and old age.

It would, perhaps, carry greater weight to quote on this subject the opinion of a stranger. Mr. Barrett Wendell has said: "A good woman is not merely a devoted wife. She

remains also what she was before marriage, a model of filial devotion deeply attached to her own family; she remains a good sister and a faithful friend. Even more completely is she a good mother; her obligations toward her children, as well as toward their father, call upon her to be mistress of the house, never neglecting the monotonous details of daily life. This unending task, minute and prosaic, is the very condition of her being, and she accomplishes it from youth to old age, forgetful of herself, smiling and happy. For not the least of her articles of faith is this: that she *must* make life agreeable for those about her. Frenchwomen who are worthy of the term '*honnête femme*' are without number throughout France, and they do not merely constitute the most beautiful type of women of this country, but they are the most numerous and most representative. If the indifferent glance of the stranger, the artist, does not take this in at once it is because, as with air and light, they are everywhere, and also because the silent devotion which they give to their duties leaves them unseen."

But the population of France is diminishing. Whatever its merits, the race is destined to disappear or to continue only through immigration. Time will bring about the realization of the most gloomy predictions on the future of France. It is true that the decrease in the birth-rate rightfully causes apprehension for the survival of the French race; it is not a sufficient comfort that the evil is not confined to France. Every population tends to diminish in numbers as it increases in wealth; France, with excessive wealth, sees her birth-rate decrease. Such is the fact we must face.

It is well to understand in the first place, that in this fact, we have to deal with one of the most mysterious instinctive tendencies of human nature. The explanations generally given are usually specious. Le Play was on the wrong track in laying the blame on the civil code and the system of inheritance which grants equal rights to all of the children—the limitations placed on the right of testamentary disposition, and the prohibition against entails. Depopulation by a decreasing birth-rate is not true of Belgium, of Italy, or of the Rhenish countries, in all of which the civil code rules. On the other hand, it is to be found in certain provinces of Russia, among the upper classes in the United States, in England, and even in Germany.

One of the reasons for the decrease in the birth-rate would seem to be the proportion between population and arable land. Agriculture has need of the child, for in agricultural work alone may the child be employed without danger to itself. In other classes of society the child is a burden made heavy by the years through which it must be carried.

The small "*bourgeois*," the minor officials in the city, living on a minimum salary with increasing expenses, closeted in small and uncomfortable apartments, and wholly dependent on their slender earnings for all of their needs and pleasures, these people deny themselves the luxury of a large family. Little by little this mode of life becomes a habit; the wife becomes solicitous for her grace, beauty, and for the virtue of her husband. The bad example is communicated from one to another, bad counsels go the rounds, and the evil spreads partly intentionally and partly by spirit of imitation. As years roll on, and emphasize the joy which children bring and the sadness of childless homes, it is too late. The harm is irremediable.

A more exact understanding of the cause of the malady would offer some possibility of finding an antidote. France with sure instinct has understood the good to be accomplished for future generations by providing through colonial expansion great areas to be opened up, cultivated, and peopled. In the colonies everything is transformed. It is well known that the French birth-rate in Canada is high. What is not so well known is that in Algeria the French are the most prolific of all the people of European origin. It will probably be the same in all the colonies where a Frenchman can live. This being the case, the formula of the cure is: wherever there is land to be had men will develop, and as new lands are not wanting to France this would appear to be her safeguard against the calamity which seems to menace her.

Perhaps also a higher moral education, a less selfish and more lofty conception of life will restore the bygone honor accorded to large families. Let the higher classes set the example. They will be imitated in good as in evil. An important duty in this regard devolves upon the French middle classes. The reasons for the decrease in their birth-rate are not insurmountable. It is a question of will; a sustained will is the remedy. As they appreciate the conse-

quences of their acts in this regard, let them be the first to cure the evil which they were the first to propagate. At a time when the birth-rate is decreasing among the majority of the civilized nations it would be well for France to "find herself" again and to prove that she wishes to live by living.

## II

I have examined in all sincerity and good faith the principal criticisms directed against France, but I do not pretend in the slightest to absolve our country of all wrongdoing. It has serious faults and inherent weaknesses of which it should rid itself; but, on the other hand, neither are other countries infallible, and ours has for its comfort the recollection of twenty centuries of perils bravely met.

The birth of France was coincident with the birth of Christianity. France first appeared in history—through the conquest of Cæsar—at the threshold of modern times, and for nearly two thousand years she has been laboring at the task of civilization. Of what other living people can this be said?

Without France, the France of Charles Martel, Charlemagne, William the Conqueror, of Godefroy de Bouillon, St. Louis, Calvin, Henry IV., of Champlain, of Louis XIV., of Voltaire, Napoleon, and Pasteur, what a deficit there would be in the sum of human accomplishment! Why, then, should we deny to France of the future, the same forces, which have made her majesty and strength through these long centuries?

Is there no good which remains to be learned from this nation which evangelized the world through the crusades and by scholastic teaching; which created Gothic art, produced the doubts of Montaigne, the philosophy of Descartes, the art and literature of the seventeenth century, the philosophy of the eighteenth, the declaration of the rights of man, the civil code, the metric system, modern art, and so many scientific discoveries and other works worthy of immortality?

France, often at her own cost, has made experiments by which other people have profited. She is daring, imprudent, courageous, and reckless, but the springs of devotion and proselytism are not dried up within her. Let there appear a risk to run, a peril to encounter and the flower of her youth is ready to meet them. Yesterday it was the conquest of Africa. To-day the conquest of the air.

Her imprudence is not unreason; and her folly is, after all, full of wisdom, since it was conceived according to the expression of Kant "under the angle of eternity." A nation which places the law of survival so high, and which in all of its actions, from the most glorious to the most ordinary, is willing to sacrifice the present for the future, is not such as history will remove from the list of the living. It is not possible that for her, who thinks so constantly of the future, there should be no future.

The French nation stands, in fact, among the sanest and most serious of to-day. It is for this reason that the foreigner, more especially the Anglo-Saxons, who have overcome many of their prejudices, apply themselves to a better knowledge of her. Our social structure, our methods of work (especially in agriculture), our notion of the family, the rights of property, the system of inheritance, and our local customs themselves are now the subjects of more careful and broad-minded study.

It is to-day conceded that there is much to be learned from this people of whom a few years ago it was thought that their existence consisted only in the life of the boulevard. Phenomena of the gravest kind which have shaken the foundations of the most self-confident societies, unheard-of struggles, and tense situations have modified many convictions and done away with many prejudices and softened the pride of nations. To-day comparisons are made. Men no longer refuse to seek in the essential principles of social order, realized by the civil law of France, the reasons for stability which they are beginning to envy us.

The French civil law, as has been too often repeated, did not come forth wholly armed from the head of Bonaparte; it was not a spontaneous birth appearing suddenly on French soil at the time of the Revolution; it is the product of a long development, of a prudent aloofness persevered in through the centuries, the definite harvest of the customs, traditions, and practical experiments which our ancient history describes by the expressive *coutumes* (customs); that is to say, that which had been in use.

This civil law, eminently practical, concrete, and realistic, was not born from the edicts of legislators more or less weighty or competent; it came into being day by day out of what Montesquieu called "the permanent relations" between individuals, things, and society. Gathered and at-

tested by the procedure of our courts and by our jurisprudence, it was only after the lapse of centuries that these "customs" received political sanction, and this without the pretense of any power to question the principles that underlay them nor to interfere with the effect of that application. What the French Revolution itself accomplished was no more than the final codification of these customs, or rather the adaptation to the whole of France, of the leading "customs" of Paris.

From these historical facts I wish simply to point out that modern French legislation is in no wise, as was claimed by the schools of Le Play and of Taine, an abstract conception handed down by the philosophers of the eighteenth century and the Revolution to the Consulate. As a matter of fact, in this modern legislation we see ancient principles of national life self-preserved, condensed, and perpetuated. The Revolution in this respect, as in many others, was but a phase of the national evolution which had been going on for centuries.

The French civil law is the fruit of the experience of a very old nation, itself the inheritor of the two great civilizations of antiquity. Such is the fact. It expresses the course of living which had been preferred by hundreds of generations and, like the French language itself, is the result of long and well-considered usage.

With regard to the relations of husband and wife in the marriage tie, of father and children, of social beings and social wealth, of capital and labor, it speaks with a voice of incomparable authority.

In most Anglo-Saxon countries, notwithstanding the numbers and the standing of the legal profession, and perhaps for that reason, jurisprudence has remained in a state of astonishing medievalism, and the countries would find advantage in a closer acquaintance with the principles of French law. The clear language which characterizes the civil code would bring an unlooked-for light to such who would read it with open minds and serious intent.

At the basis of all society are the relations between the individual, property, and society itself. The whole truth is stated in two lines as strong and comprehensive as could be written.

"Article 544. Property or ownership is the right to enjoy and dispose

of things in the most absolute manner, provided that the possessor does not put them to any use prohibited by laws or regulations."

The three prime elements, the right of the owner, the object of ownership, and social order itself, are brought together and weighed against one another.

"Article 545. No person shall be forced to surrender his property unless for the public good and for a just and reasonable compensation previously given."

Does not this one phrase sum up the struggle of civil order against the political order? The political power, violent and passionate, seeks constantly to invade the rights of the individual, the right of labor. But this latter finds a defender in the social order more equitable than the domination of leaders. Thesis and antithesis of despotism and communism are held each in its place by these few words:

"Article 732. The law does not take into consideration the nature or the origin of property in regulating its inheritance."

How admirably simple is this statement, forbidding in the civil order, the transmission of responsibility for wrong, admitted in the religious order. The result of this prohibition is to assure to each generation the stability in the social order and the sacredness of title which every death and every birth tends to disturb.

The following are the two articles which we may say link the family to society, joining one to the other:

"Article 165. Marriages shall be celebrated *publicly* in the presence of the civil officer of the domicile of one of the two parties."

"Article 191. Every marriage which has not been publicly contracted and which has not been celebrated in the presence of the proper public officer, may be attacked by the husband or wife, by the Father and Mother, the ascendants and all those who have an existing and actual interest therein [a shading of singular precision and subtlety] and also by the public prosecutor."

The following are the articles which provide for the transfer of ownership, the transmission of property to descendants for the unending creation of new families; they are the master articles consecrating the permanence of the state and of society:

"Article 731. Successions are bestowed upon the children and the descendants of the decedent, his ascendants, and collateral relatives in the order and according to the rules hereafter prescribed."

"Article 745. Children or their descendants inherit from their father and mother, grandfathers and grandmothers, or other ascendants without

distinction of sex nor of primogeniture, and even if they are born of different marriages.

"They inherit in equal shares and *per capita* when they are all of the first degree and inherit in their own right; they inherit *per stirpes* when all or part of them take by representation."

"Article 755. Relatives beyond the twelfth degree do not inherit."

"Article 896. Entails are prohibited."

"Article 913. Gifts *inter vivos* or by will cannot exceed one-half of the property of such donor, if he leaves only one legitimate child him surviving; one-third if he leaves two children; and one-fourth if he leaves three or a greater number."

Is not this a remarkable example of perfect moderation in the social relations? How apparent is the constant solicitude for a perfect balance between all the factors of national existence.

The great principle of our law is that of permanence, duration, survival; the family is of more importance than the individual and the race more important than the family. Legitimate heirs are in a sense coexistent with property rights; they are born at one and the same time and have a right over property as soon as it makes an appearance. The moment a man's labor is productive he has created in advance something for those who are to come, for those whom he may never know. A wise forethought of existing society on behalf of the society to come. Man cannot dispose of even that which he has earned or which he has created without reserving a portion of his product for future generations; he cannot isolate himself from these coming generations; the mere fact of their existence is an aid to him; he cannot substitute his own will to the law of transfer and transmission as laid down in the code which anteceded his own existence and to which he is submitted by the mere fact of his birth. The limitations placed on the right of testamentary disposition, the prohibition against mortmain, the absence of masculine privilege (and this in the country of the Salic law!), the negation of the right of primogeniture or of entail—everything in the system tends to incite to constant activity, succeeding generations, without breaking the tie which unites them.

The evils attendant upon other systems are known to all; the monstrous inequality in wealth; the unlabored enrichment of certain classes and individuals who are benefiting, drawing profit inequitably and without scruple from the



work of centuries; the necessary disappearance of the small proprietor and farmer; the accumulation of the poor in the large cities; the increase in charitable institutions and the dangerous division of society into two classes—the over-rich and the overpoor; the brazen luxury of the first class and the angry violence of the second; and, finally, the political campaigns which marshal the one against the other. The equalizing process going on in France for more than a century has not yet brought about the final solution of the problem, but in diminishing suffering it has probably pointed out the way.

The sense of proportion, is a gift which the climate of France has given to the race, and daily renews. Life is naturally well balanced under the influences of its smiling climate. This lesson of moderation and discretion, and the art of limiting one's desires and bridling one's ambitions, would be beyond doubt the most precious gift which France could make to America.

Vast territories, unexploited wealth, and the sustained effort indispensable for so great a task as their development, strain body and soul. Under such a régime, muscles and nerves are stretched to the breaking-point. The time will soon come, when the task shall be so far advanced, that the work of exploitation and the accumulation of wealth need no longer remain the principal occupation of a great civilization and when it will seem good, wise, and reasonable to enjoy life after having assured the means of living.

Then, perhaps, our neighbors will realize that certain uses to which French activity has been devoted, heretofore so easily turned to ridicule, are based on sound reason drawn from a long experience of civilized living. The cultivation of things of the mind, literary taste, and artistic activity are signs not of a decadent age, but of a period of noble and complete fruition. The nations which have left their mark in the memory of men, and which still claim the gratitude of the centuries, only attained to this perfect blossoming after prolonged and painful effort. The monuments which they have built testify for them. The powerful merchant cities of antiquity, Tyre and Carthage, are to-day mere names. Those civilizations only have been really great whose high perfection was scientific, artistic, or literary, for they were wedded to the realities; not to the ephemeral, but to what endures.

The thing that endures is the idea, the thought, or rather its expression. When this expression is clear and definite, bringing out the idea in clear relief, appealing to the thinking qualities of man, it is the only human thing which is higher than humanity and becomes a part of eternity. The discovery of a physical or mathematical law drawn from nature's secrets, the psychological truth torn from its hiding-place in the soul, an esthetic harmony separated from its hiding-place in the crowd, this alone adds an indestructible asset to the capital of centuries. Newton gives expression to the law of gravity and thus explains the mechanism of the universe. Descartes says: "I think, therefore I am," and founds the philosophy of reason. An unknown builder discovers the principle of the Gothic vault and formulates the rules of a new architecture which adds a new charm to the beauty of created things.

Discovery, construction, philosophy are modes of expression. The notion lies dormant and confined in the recesses of the mind until the spark of expression gives it life. Then it emerges from the shadow and becomes an idea. An idea, to which adequate expression is given, is a revelation of the "ideal," of that which is universal and eternal. There is not an intellect which in its particular sphere of activity, from the highest to the most lowly, does not tend toward an idea, does not do homage, often unconsciously, to the guiding power of the idea. We say of the most humble artisan that he has "good ideas," which means simply that he has some inventive faculty and can in some degree generalize. The higher hierarchy of every society is built of persons and professions according as they approach more or less closely to the world of ideas. And the same discriminating process is applied to determine the gradation of nations as well as of individuals, and the place which nations occupy is determined by the energy and time devoted to the effort for perfect expression of the idea.

All peoples are in need of an ideal, of some noble occupation, of some disinterested and unselfish goal. The ever-present elaboration of thought, scientific, literary, or artistic, is the natural end of all human effort. When the plowman has plowed his furrow, when the hunter has killed his quarry, when the weaver's loom is still, each one sits at rest before his cottage and gives way to dreams. This is the fruitful hour where each is living his true life.

The Frenchman, ingenious, active, scion of an old race and of an old civilization, takes delight in this dreaming and speculation. The powerful intellectual production of France, uninterrupted for eight or ten centuries, is only explained by the deep, serious, and silent elaboration and study which continues without ceasing among the mass of the people. The handiwork of the artisan, the ingenuity of the professional entertainer (whom the ancients knew as the *trouveur*, or finder), the somewhat sleepy study of the petty *bourgeois* reviewing his classics, the literary discussions in the shade of the village elm—all contribute their share. The nation by continual practice is ever busy at its self-culture. It is ever in search of purity, quality, and finish, and is always ready to criticize its workmen, its masters, and itself. Discussions bearing on aptness of expression (if only about simple questions of spelling) excite warm interest because they are tests of precision. Judgment is passed upon these matters with delicate shading and all outward manifestations of the intellect are submitted to the scrutiny of reflection and reason as well as of existing standards.

This intellectual effort has also its moral side. To reach out to an idea or an ideal is an uplift toward the eternal. To discovery of causes, to improve and cultivate good taste, to analyze law and be obedient to it, are not these elements of religion? It is, perhaps, by reason of this that French civilization has withstood the irreligious spirit that has hung about it the shackles of doubt and skepticism which the French spirit has made use of as instruments in the search for truth. France has faith. A people with zeal for charity, the love of the beautiful, and readiness for self-sacrifice in private and in public life cannot be charged with impiety. Their conflicts, their polemics, their harsh dissensions, have their origin for the most part in a profession of faith or in some act of unselfish abnegation.

It is surely in this sense that Mr. Barrett Wendell has said, as Nietzsche did before him, that "the French people is by instinct deeply religious." Mr. Faguet is astonished at this remark from the author of *France of To-day*. For in his view "the French race from the Middle Ages to our own time is at bottom naturally skeptical, and if not hostile to religion is, at all events, inaccessible to any deep religious feeling."

The eminent critic is, perhaps, misled by a too liberal interpretation of terms. In the course of its history the French race has furnished remarkable examples of the religious spirit. The land of St. Louis and St. Vincent de Paul has accorded religion generous measure; the great monastic orders, and in particular Catholic foreign missions, have unceasingly for centuries levied from their children heavy tribute of generosity and self-sacrifice. Even in the bewilderment of souls which marks our time it is not impossible to recognize some of the most striking characteristics of the religious spirit. The great emotions which stir the French people are still manifestations of faith.

If there exists a race whose tendency is toward the general, the universal, it is surely the French race. The fact has been so often a reproach that we may at least claim the honor of it. Was not this Taine's strong criticism of the French Revolution? The classicism, the Latinism, the dogmatism of the race became exaggerated to a degree of abstraction that inspired the Jacobins. This is unquestioned, but is not this very excess of fanaticism within the logical development of the French temperament?

This spirit of unselfish abstraction, the zeal of propaganda, this aptness for generalization and universalization—in a word, this devotion to an Idea which so frequently inspires the performances of the race—is the mainstay of the most efficient French action still being exercised on the American continent.

If North America (United States and Canada) is still subjected to the impress of French influence, it is through neither commerce nor production nor science nor skill and scarcely through art, literature, or the drama; it is, above all, through the religious propaganda, the Catholic propaganda of which French priests north and south of the Great Lakes were the initiators and of which they are still to-day the devoted assistants.

The development of Catholicism in North America was a phenomenon of the greatest historical importance. I shall not undertake to sketch the extent of this development nor to determine its causes. It is a fact, nevertheless, that its origins and its most active support, at the outset at least, are to be found in French Canada.

The history of Canada may be summed up in three words: exploration, struggle, and evangelization. Politics did lit-

tle more than blunder; the great idea of Champlain to unite Hudson Bay with the Caribbean by the domination of the interior along the valley of the Mississippi seemed about to be realized at the time when Cavelier de La Salle began the navigation of the Great Lakes and, following the course of the Mississippi, founded Louisiana in 1682. It is also a well-known fact that these splendid explorations stimulated the zeal of the Jesuits, who sent into the West, Joliet and Père Marquette, the first explorers of Missouri, northern Mississippi, Arkansas, and Illinois.

A fact less well known is that the Récollets, associated with the work of La Salle, founded what became in the religious field an enduring work. On the 27th of February, 1680, Father Hennepin started from Fort Crevecoeur, passing through Illinois to northern Mississippi, and reached the point occupied to-day by the city of St. Paul. Father Hennepin also discovered on the great river the falls which he named "Falls of St. Anthony."

This work was carried on during the entire French occupation of Canada by the sending of missionaries and the maintenance of a chapel at Beauharnais. An interruption followed the loss of the Canadian colony, but toward 1820 the tradition was revived and French Canadians made a settlement under the protection of Fort Snelling, not far from the spot where the city of St. Paul was one day to rise, and where, in fact, its foundation was laid in 1841 by Father Galtier. In 1854 the city consisted of three thousand inhabitants, while to-day it numbers two hundred thousand.

St. Paul was erected into a see in 1850. In 1901, when Archbishop Ireland, who had been at the head of the diocese since 1884, was celebrating his golden anniversary, the city had become a metropolitan see of the archbishopric, with five suffragan bishops, with six hundred priests, and four hundred thousand Catholics, and, in the archiepiscopal city alone, twenty-three churches.

Archbishop Ireland, in the address made at the time, did homage to the great French explorers and missionaries as follows: "Ah!" said he, "the priests of the diocese of St. Paul, especially those of the primitive days, those who built it, it is our pride to glorify their names. The first Catholics of the ministry, for the most part, spoke French. Monsignor Crétin, a Frenchman, drew upon France for his clergy. France is indeed the country of missionaries."

I have cited this example and this text because nothing could better explain nor with more authority, the part which France can claim in the Catholic evangelization of the United States. If it were needful to enumerate all of her services in this direction and all the illustrious names which she can claim, an entire volume would not be sufficient.

Catholic zeal was concentrated on the Indian Missions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But following the War of Independence and the consecration of Bishop Carroll in 1790 as "Bishop of Baltimore," the organization of the Catholic Church in America became the all-absorbing task. When the work of recruiting and educating an American clergy was undertaken, Bishop Carroll appealed to Mr. Emery, Superior of St. Sulpice, to found a seminary in the Episcopal city. "In the month of March, 1790, four Sulpiciens and five seminarians embarked from St. Malo, and on the 3d of October of the same year the first American seminary was opened in Baltimore, from whose doors was to issue a native clergy powerful in number and in influence." This great edifice was erected upon a French foundation.

Needless to say, the pioneer period now belongs to the past, and the Catholic clergy of America, naturally enough, seeks more and more to recruit its personnel from the faithful in America. Threatened by the violent attacks of "native Americanism" or "Know-nothingism," the Church in America dreads, above all, the accusation that it is subject to foreign influences. But in spite of all, the old relations and reciprocal services still continue, thanks more especially to the immediate neighborhood of the French-Canadian Catholics. (See Brunetière's article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* entitled "Catholicism in the United States.")

There are fifteen millions of Catholics in the United States at the present time, made up mainly of children or descendants of Catholic immigrants. There is no formal evidence that the Catholic religion is gaining on Protestantism. Nevertheless, Cardinal Gibbons figures that there was an average of thirty thousand conversions a year during the closing years of the nineteenth century. That powerful organization, the "Catholic Church Extension Society," founded in Chicago only seven years ago, has accomplished such wonderful results that one optimistic witness has ex-

pressed the double hope "that in twenty-five years, more than half of the inhabitants of the United States will have embraced the Catholic faith," and, again, "that the United States will become the first Catholic country of the world." To analyze the causes of this movement would require minute and extended study. In the land founded by the Puritans "seeking to escape the depravity of Europe," Rome is regaining her foothold amid the multiplicity of conflicting sects, the discipline and perseverance of the Catholic Church and the devotion of its clergy, seconded by the tolerant sympathy of the Government, offer to the mass of the people a secure resting-place. The tendency of the immigrants, whose number is ever increasing and gradually covering over the older strata of population, is to hold to the faith of their fathers. Immigrants of Irish, Italian, and French Canadian origin are numerous, prolific, and energetic. And, moreover, a certain aloofness and austerity, characteristic of Protestantism, may also serve to repel those timid souls who have need of comfort and sympathetic support. The great army of voluntary exiles, uprooted from their native soil, most naturally seek a shelter from the tempest. What more natural than to seek it in the one sanctuary which has lasted throughout the centuries?

America is Catholic by birth; Catholicism came with Christopher Columbus (*the Christ bearer*). One hundred and fifty millions of Catholics from Hudson Bay to the Strait of Magellan are true to its traditions. It is impossible that on such soil its development should cease.

From the human point of view alone the Catholic Church succeeds because it is a powerful organization devoted to the greatest and most efficient civilizing tradition which the world has ever known. The child of two great families, Semitic and Aryan, heir to the Roman Empire, progenitor of the Western nations, the Church has reached the highest degree of universality which it is given to humanity to attain. In the present state of civilization, by virtue of imponderable causes, easier to realize than to explain, to universalize is to Latinize. And the name of France is indissolubly connected with Catholic expansion throughout the world, and especially in America. If Catholicism, which is necessarily of Roman and Latin origin, is in a state of development in that distant land, is indeed partly French.

This logical trend of things is strengthened by the con-

stant and close contact of the Church in America with the Church in French Canada.

Catholicism in the United States and Catholicism in Canada are as two brothers living side by side and infused with the same vital forces. They have grown up together and will develop simultaneously in that immense western territory whose colonization will be the great work of the twentieth century.

I cannot in this article touch upon the question of the future of Canada; but the universal opinion is that Canada will realize the prophecy of Louis XIV.'s intendant, who said, "This land is destined to see great things." Before half a century Canada will be one of the richest and most powerful countries of the world. Whatever may happen, a very important place in that great country will be reserved to the French race, the French language, French tradition, and, perhaps, in the near future, French culture.

After their separation from France, the French of Canada had a foremost duty—namely, to live, to multiply, and to endure. This duty they accomplished, and another as well, for, faithful to the memory of the country of their origin, they have kept fresh in their hearts the cult of their lost fatherland. The people of Canada have, perhaps more than all others, a memory of the past; their eyes are ever cast behind them, and yet they are the youngest of all nations, and the future is theirs.

In the association, henceforth indissoluble, of the French Canadian with his Anglo-Saxon brother he is not merging his identity or individuality. On the contrary, he retains his traditional gifts, his well-defined and accentuated qualities, and his defects. In the forest or on the plain the French Canadian is grubbier, woodsman, farmer, and peasant. In the cities he is the jurist, the legislator, the physician, and the orator, the able and supple purveyor of ideas, born for power. In town or country he is skilful and fearless. In general less enterprising in business than his Anglo-Saxon brother, he occupies a place proportionally more important in public affairs. He takes pride in having witnessed the birth and the growth of Sir Wilfrid Laurier—of world-wide renown.

The French Canadian is in the mass strongly attached to the Catholic Church. In the West the progress of Catholicism goes hand in hand with that of colonization. "In



1817 there was not a single Catholic priest throughout the entire West. In 1845 there were six priests. To-day there are two archdioceses with five suffragans; and the single diocese of St. Boniface alone numbers [in 1907] 205 priests, 93 churches, and 87,218 faithful." We are obviously dealing with a great force not only for evangelization, but for civilization. This conquering force is French Canadian and therefore half French.

These are facts which French vigilance cannot afford to overlook: we are affected by the progress of Islamism in Africa. How much more should we take concern for that of Catholicism in America. Canadian Catholicism, worked by a most active propaganda, seems at times inclined to loosen the traditional ties which attach it to France. Recent laws, in particular the separation of Church and State (which, on the other hand, have in fact given greater liberty to the clergy and the faithful), the attitude of the French Government with regard to Rome and the religious orders—all these have furnished ammunition for the most dangerous onslaught. This campaign, aided by certain false conceptions, might have met with success. But it is evident that the higher clergy of Canada have fully realized the fatal results of a false step in this connection. Were they to seek alliance and support elsewhere than in France, they would unavoidably be "delatinized"; they would be turning away from their proper goal.

To be Catholic is to tend toward universality. With such an end in view France is the natural source of aid and support. And French Catholicism has still sufficient strength to offer a helping hand to those who are willing to look in the direction to which she is tending. And, moreover, France herself is still a living power. It would show a great lack of foresight, even for ventures which are most assured of their future, to accept any theory involving a rupture with France.

French Canada need not concern itself with the vicissitudes of every-day politics. It has a higher function, the cure of souls in America, and the guardianship of its future. Destiny has made it the defender of its French and Latin origins; remain faithful to these sources of your power, adhere to the tree of which you are one of the limbs and from whose sap you draw your life and your strength.

As French Canada has survived, she owes it to herself to

be worthy of the survival. By adhering to and fostering within her the spirit and the soul of France she will find the strength to fulfil her own destiny and realize her own ideals. The time has come for her to take the stand independently, with clear foresight, fearlessly and unequivocally. Great tasks and heavy responsibilities are hers, and she cannot linger in isolation.

The colonization of the West opens a new page of history, and the story will be the more inspiring and the more deeply graven as it is dictated by higher ideals. France, if she cannot offer her wealth, can at least contribute her traditions and the principles which have made her own greatness. It is natural that at such a time the two countries should seek out one another. The example is set by the highest authorities in Canada. Ministers and statesmen of whatever party come to France to strengthen their attachment to things French.

Let the French Canadian, especially of the younger generation, make similar journeys. Let him prolong his sojourn and learn to seek at the fountain's head the priceless traditions of his race. By contact with the soil he will get the impulse and acquire the high outlook essential to the fulfilment of his civilizing mission. He will take back to America something of the original legacy left us by history to be transmitted to him in good time. Thus will he take up the thread of centuries gone by. Richelieu and Colbert, Champlain and Montcalm, will come into their own again. The overthrow will become an incident, and the will of the sons, wiping out the defeat of the fathers, will truly resurrect on American soil a "new France."

This new France will be the younger sister of the great Republic which prospers under her starry banner.

It is fair to conclude that the conflict between the differing European and Christian civilizations is at an end in America. All labor for the honor of a common past and the triumph of a like ideal. What matter differences of form, dogma, and ceremony? The same Gospel words are spoken to all alike: "Peace on earth and good-will to men."

But peace does not depend entirely on the will of man. Peace is at the mercy of men's passions, and to control them a balance of power is necessary. The democracies of America will in the near future regulate this balance of power.

Between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the new conti-

ment, made such by the Panama Canal, will be the body in whose orbit the other planets must move. Its people, children of all the races of the world, heir to every civilization, respecter of all beliefs, will protect and shelter them all.

“World-shelterer, in whose open folds  
The wandering races rest.”

The dream of the ancient navigators is realized and the routes to America have brought Europe nearer to Asia; the Far East and the Far West are one. The new continent unites them and brings them together, and stands as arbiter between them. (Witness the ending of the Russo-Japanese War.) The axis of the earth has shifted. The horizon is enlarged; and on this new horizon henceforth every conquering power will look upon the warning summit of American greatness.

France also is a balancing power. Situated at the cross-roads of Europe, she has, in the course of her long history, fought against all barbarians and against all hegemonies, whether from the North or the South. Bordering on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, France also unites the two worlds of the East and of the West. And in consonance with her destined task it was she who opened the Suez Canal and swung the first pick in Panama.

France stretches her peninsula of Brittany toward North America like the arch of a bridge, and the shortest and safest crossing is from Quebec or from New York to Brest. Geography and history alike encourage between France and North America more frequent and closer contact and unbroken understanding: the United States, France, Canada—the trilogy has a profound significance. These closer relations will be ever fruitful, far into the distant future, provided man can seize their import and their value and not run counter to the beneficent work of Time.

GABRIEL HANOTAUX.